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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/26/2017

TAGS: PREL PHUM KPAL IS

SUBJECT: MFA: NO CURRENT PLANS FOR DEMOLITIONS IN GREATER JERUSALEM

REF: A. STATE 15177

1B. SIEVERS-SHAMPAINE 2/14 E-MAIL

Classified By: DCM Gene A. Cretz, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

¶1. (C) Following up on PolCouns' delivery of Ref A demarche regarding reports of a GOI decision to demolish 41 homes in the Beit Sahour area, MFA Director for North America Dan Arbell informed PolCouns February 26 that the GOI has no plans for such demolitions "at this time." Arbell said he had raised USG concerns with Civil Administration officials, who confirmed that while there were ongoing issues regarding "illegal construction" in the Beit Sahour area, the Civil Administration had no current plans to demolish the houses. Arbell said he thought some demolitions would eventually be carried out, but in much smaller numbers.

¶2. (C) Asked specifically about the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate's housing project, Arbell said the Patriarchate was discussing the building permit issue directly with the Civil Administration. PolCouns asked that Arbell keep the Embassy apprised of new developments, and stressed the importance of the GOI avoiding actions in the Greater Jerusalem area that could inflame the situation at a very delicate time.

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JONES